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Home For Christmas

by hinotoriii

Summary

After attempting to celebrate Christmas for five years without their dear friend Robin joining them, the Shepherds finally share in enjoying the holiday season with him once again by their side.

Notes

Written as a Christmas gift for flyppa. It grew, and became too long to fit in your card (not my fault it was the characters >_>), but you can enjoy it here now instead of trying to decode what would be my messy handwriting otherwise. Hope you enjoy, even with the different pairings (I wanted to include Chrom and Olivia as a happily married couple, since they were together on one of your games).

Christmas was not a holiday usually celebrated within Plegia. However, Robin had insisted in bringing the tradition into his home.

Having spent the past year adjusting to a brand new life for himself -- one which finally granted him freedom from both his past demons and the brand that was no longer visible upon his hand -- and catching up on the five years which had passed in his absence, he was determined to hold some sort of celebration with those he considered his nearest and dearest. Yet it had to be done *his* way; held within *his* home, with the resources both he and his young daughter Morgan found together.

His wife, Tharja, could care less for the holiday. She didn't understand the purpose of such a celebration, nor her husbands fascination with finding the perfect tree to keep in their house for the duration of the season. Seeing the way his face would split into a wide grin whenever he found something interesting however was somewhat different, and Tharja found that if seeing him happy meant suffering through a month of bright colours and garish decorations, then she would make do. After all, she was simply content to have him back by her side.

What Robin hadn't prepared her for until much too late a time though was the amount of friends that would be present within their house during the festivities. Although having adopted the role of High Councillor by his Aunt meant Robin had been granted a fairly well sized house in the city it was still by no means on the same league of that of a castle, which had been a possible alternative location to hold such an event before Robin's determination had set in. Instead when Tharja looked around she found her house filled with much too many people, and she knew that if matters were different, she would have probably hexed a few of them by now to get them to leave.

Sitting in the room currently Tharja could pick out said husband, the younger version of their first daughter sitting happily on his knees and laughing as he gently bounced his leg up and down. Robin himself was laughing, the corners of his eyes crinkling at something that Chrom -- who was sitting to Robin's side -- had said to him. Beside Chrom was the younger Lucina sitting cross-legged with the end of her fathers cape draped over her shoulders, her younger brother Inigo sitting beside her and playing a game of snap with the pack of cards their cousin Owain had brought with him. Every so often one of the boys would shout, bickering between one another before calming down again and continuing on with their oddly competitive game.

Also sitting in the room were Olivia, Lissa and Emmeryn. Olivia and Lissa were talking between one another, and Emmeryn -- having sadly still not managed to find her voice after having been miraculously found in a small village three years ago -- held a contented smile upon her lips as she watched the young children play before their feet. Sat close by her side with a hand clasped in her own was her still-fairly-new husband, and Frederick happily remained quiet as he let his thumb move in smooth circles lightly over her skin.

To Robin's other side -- and sitting beside Tharja herself -- was Maribelle, contently drinking at her tea. The room was full of life, and Tharja couldn't help but to recall how Robin had told her just who was coming over, and who, out of all their friends, still remained to finally arrive. She could barely imagine just how confusing things would be once the older versions of all their children arrived, too.

"So, Tharja," Maribelle said, breaking the train of thought Tharja held. With a slight glare she turned, noticing the curious expression that the other wore upon her face. "It surprises me that you would have entertained having everyone over here. Usually whenever someone asks to visit, you're very against the suggestion. What changed your mind this time?"

"You already know the answer to that," Tharja said, shooting her glare at the seat across from her.

"I have a hunch, yes. But I would rather hear the words from you yourself."

Out of the corner of her eye Tharja could spot how Maribelle's eyes almost seemed to sparkle, almost as if she were amused by whatever was running through her mind. Narrowing her eyes, Tharja replied.

"You just want something new to laugh about, troublesome woman." She paused, crossing her arms over her chest as she rose her head somewhat proudly. "All I'll tell you is the obvious, that I live to see Robin happy, even if his desires are ridiculous."

“Oh Tharja,” Maribelle answered, a hint of laughter hidden badly behind the words. “Simply admit it. He wished for a celebration, and you let him do as he wished because even you can remember how much he adored Christmas during the years he used to live within Ylisse.”

The words were the truth. Tharja knew just as much as any of them did that Robin had fallen in love with the holiday as soon as he was exposed to it. She still couldn’t forget the look on his face the day he had stepped into the grand hallways of Ylisse’s castle and saw Frederick, Vaike and Stahl adding the final touches to the Christmas tree that stood there, nor the way his eyes had brightened at the mere sight of it. She had more or less lost her husband to the wonder of it all for the week as he followed Chrom and Lissa around like a little puppy, aiding them in their work with his strategies and asking various things about what the whole holiday meant whenever a spare moment arose. Both Chrom and herself had found it somewhat amusing once they discovered he had been making notes in one of his journals about what he had been hearing, and eventually Chrom had taken such pleasure in seeing his best friend so in awe of something so new to him that he had offered invitations to both him and Tharja to join them that year.

Robin had wanted to decline at first, knowing from what he’d heard that the holiday was a special time meant for friends and loved ones. Tharja hadn’t cared either way, leaving him with the final decision of what would happen -- but Chrom had been determined to have them a part of the celebrations. Robin had tried to argue his case, but the moment that both Chrom and Olivia’s faces had softened as they replied by telling him that he was considered part of their family Tharja knew they were going to be staying. She knew Robin far too well to guess that he would be touched -- and probably a little teary -- at such a heartfelt answer.

For every year that followed up until the first year of his disappearance, Robin was always a present figure during their Christmases.

“Hey guys?” A voice cut in, causing all in the room to look towards the door. Vaike walked through it, pointing behind him as he let out a small little sigh and shrugged his shoulders.

“I can’t find the keg. And I think some of the others have just turned up. There’s a helluva lot of ruckus outside, and this isn’t the Vaike’s house, so the Vaike ain’t dealing with it.”

“Oooh, I should go and check that out,” Robin said, hopping up from his seat. “Thanks Vaike. I’ll be right back, everyone.”

Tharja watched as he hurried off, resisting the urge to sigh herself. The house was going to be packed with all their old Shepherd friends before long, she could already tell.

“I don’t think I can eat another bite.”

Severa leant back against the floor as she huffed out a contented sigh, a hand resting upon her stomach which was then full of food. Beside her Lucina -- or, the older version of her -- gave a tiny smile, amusement dancing within her eyes.

“You had three servings of food. No wonder why you can’t eat anymore, I think you may have out eaten both your father and Stahl.”

“Huh,” Severa huffed. *“No one* can out eat Stahl. That guy probably has a portal in his stomach that sends his food to another world, there’s no other explanation for how much he eats.”

“Still,” Lucina said through her laughter. “I think I saw your father adding extra sweets to his dessert.”

“Probably. He does that at home. Mother tries not to notice now.” Severa glanced up at Lucina, her eyes widening as an idea suddenly came to mind. “Hey, can I style your hair for you?”

“How do you get a tree like the one you have to live for so long here?” Came the sound of Sumia’s voice from across the room. She was speaking to Tharja, yet beside her sat Miriel, who Tharja noticed had pushed her glasses up her nose before answering the question.

“That was actually partly my doing. You see, although Plegia is a climate mostly known for it’s sand and thus cannot sustain the trees we normally use this time of year back in Ylisse, I was able to find an enchantment that could be used to extend the life of the one Robin wished to use as a Christmas tree. With Tharja’s help, we enchanted it, so it should live well before the next season passes.”

“Father, what’s this?” Tharja heard Noire ask. Tuning out of the conversation Miriel and Sumia were sharing, she turned to notice the teenager standing by Robin, holding a carefully wrapped box in her hands. Robin’s smile grew bright like sunshine when he saw, and he turned in his seat to face the older child.

“It’s a present,” He answered. “I know you don’t recall much about the holiday’s traditions, but it’s apparently considered normal to give gifts to those you’re close to. That one’s from me to you. Your mother should have a present for you under the tree too.”

“Oh. … It’s not going to shock me … is it?” Noire asked tentatively. Robin let out a little chuckle.

“No, darling. Remember what we’ve told you, that you don’t have to worry about that happening now? I was with your mother when we went to the marketplaces and brought it, you’ll like it. I promise you.”

Tharja fought her own smile, watching as the daughter she was yet to have seemed to relax under her father's words. Instead her eyes continued to travel around the large room, picking up on bits of conversation that people were having with one another. It was a room that was full of joy and laughter, and although really Tharja still wished the planning of such an event hadn’t taken so much time and effort out of her and her husband, she could admit that she felt content surrounded by those she knew so well.

She felt as if she belonged, and Tharja knew that it was how Robin felt whenever he was in the presence of these people. After all, they were really more of an extension to their own small family.

Tharja would never speak the words aloud however. Their friends would never let her hear the end of them, hell, *Robin* wouldn’t let her hear the end of them.

She was pulled out of her thoughts by the sound of something gently tapping against a glass, the voices around her dulling into murmurs, before eventually fizzling out completely.

“Inigo, sit down,” Chrom mumbled, turning to the excitable teenage version of his son and gently pushing his shoulder so that he would sit beside the younger Inigo beside him. Once he was settled, Chrom turned to the room, a bashful expression creeping onto his face as he reached to rub a hand at the back of his neck.

“So err -- as you all know, I’m never too great at this speeches in particular. In fact, I wasn’t actually going to make a speech this year, considering that Olivia and I aren’t the ones holding a Christmas event this year. But … if it’s alright ... “

Tharja watched as his eyes quickly dart to Robin, silently asking him if it was okay for him to

continue. Bewildered yet somewhat seemingly amused Robin gave him a nod, looking down at his lap for a second as the younger Morgan managed to flop her way onto it.

“Right. Well, I’ll keep things short, so that Vaike and Gaius can return to the keg they dragged in earlier --” Vaike made a sound of indignation, which caused a few people in the room to laugh. “Anyway, all I really wanted to say was that, today has been … it’s been amazing, and I think everyone can agree. For the first time in a long while, it finally feels like we’re having a proper Christmas again.”

The room grew quieter, and Tharja stood from her seat to silently move to stand behind her husband once she picked up on his growing confusion.

“The thing is Robin, it has been incredibly hard for us to even attempt to celebrate this holiday in the five years you’ve been gone. We tried, and things brightened considerably when we found Emm again, but there was always something missing. And that thing ... or person, rather, … was you.

“Christmas just hasn’t been the same without you. Everyone has missed your optimism and overall love and adoration for this time of year, and it’s just always felt wrong somehow that we were trying to continue on each year without you to enjoy it with us. Like you were always supposed to do.

“In Ylisse, a part of Christmas for us is the celebration of our heroes, mostly of course the Hero King Marth. You know that, since Ricken lent you the book about it’s history. But, there was one hero we couldn’t celebrate with, and that was the one we most wanted back in our lives. And now you’ve returned, and although we’re in a house in Plegia and not in Ylisse like most of us are used to, it finally feels as if we can celebrate in the way we remember we used to.

“So, Robin, this is to you,” Chrom held up his glass, toasting it towards the stunned man. Tharja set a calming hand on his shoulder, and wordlessly she glanced around her as others raised their glasses for him. “You’re a part of our family, and you always will be.”

“To Robin!” The room repeated.

Tharja tilted her head as Robin stared at them all, and when his face turned to her she quickly noticed the tears that had fallen. Giving him a small smile she leant forward, brushing a careful hand against his cheek as she wiped them away with her fingertips.

“Didn’t I tell you that you were the heart to this whole Christmas thing?” She asked.

And the truth was that to those spending the day with him, he was.

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